3rd February 1925]

Criminal Justice.

Treatment of depressed classes by the Sub-Magistrate of Omalur.

*7 Q.—Mr. R. VEERIAN: Will the hon. the Law Member be pleased to state—

(a) why the members of the depressed classes are not allowed to get into the witness box in the Court of the Sub-Magistrate at Omalur, Salem district, as other classes of people;

(b) whether the Sub-Magistrate of the Omalur Court is a Brahman or non-Brahman; and

(c) whether the Government are aware that Mr. Somallai Pannady (member of the depressed classes), Honorary Magistrate, is not being treated properly by the Sub-Magistrate of Omalur owing to caste prejudice?

A.—The Government have no information.

Mr. R. VEERIAN:—"With reference to clauses (a), (b) and (c) I put the question with a view to elicit information. Here I find that the answer is that the Government have no information. May I therefore know whether the Government think that this is a very trivial matter, that calling for information is not at all necessary and that they do not want to respect the feelings of the submerged, oppressed and depressed classes." (Laughter.)

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR:—"I am afraid I must rob my hon. Friend of his satisfaction on that particular subject of having pushed us to a corner. I have got information now. I will read it: 'I have the honour to report that no complaint has been received in this office to the effect that members of the depressed classes are not allowed to get into the witness box in the court of the Sub-Magistrate of Omalur as other classes of people, and from inquiries made, I understand that no such distinction is made. The present Sub-Magistrate of Omalur is a non-Brahman.' As regards the point raised in clause (c), on one occasion the Sub-Magistrate asked Mr. Pannady to go out of the court because he was interested in a particular case. There are no other grievances of Mr. Pannady."

Mr. R. VEERIAN:—"May I know whether the present Sub-Magistrate is a non-Brahman or the previous one?"

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR:—"The present Sub-Magistrate appears to be a Brahman."

Mr. R. VEERIAN:—"May I know if I get a mahazar, the Government will be pleased to inquire into the matter?"

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR:—"That depends on the mahazar."

Police.

Detection of the perpetrator of the St. Thomas' Mount tragedy.

*8 Q.—Sriman SASIBHUSHAN RATH Mahasayo: Will the hon. the Law Member be pleased to state with reference to press communiqué dated 25th November 1924—

(a) whether the Police have so far expressed their inability to apprehend the perpetrator or perpetrators of the St. Thomas' Mount railway station murders;

(*b*) whether the reward of Rs. 2,000 has been offered at the instance of the Police; and

(*c*) whether there is any principle on which such offer of rewards is based?

A.—(*a*) It is a fact that the murderer has not been arrested.

(*b*) No.

(*c*) A reward is offered when it is considered that without such inducement persons will withhold information which they may happen to have.

Sriman SASIBHUSHAN RATH Mahasayo :—"I want to know whether such rewards are offered at the instance of the police?"

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—"Sometimes they are."

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—"May I know whether the final report has been made by the Police?"

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—"The case has not yet been detected."

Conduct of officers of the Madras City Police regarding the Imperial Bank case.

* 9 Q.—Mr. S. SATYAMURTI : Will the hon. the Law Member be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether he has come to any decision as to further action to be taken about the conduct of some officers of the Madras City Police in connexion with the Imperial Bank fraud case and the action of the Commissioner of Police in issuing a circular commending the action of the Police in the said case without reference to Government;

(*b*) if so, the nature of the action taken or proposed to be taken; and

(*c*) if not, the reasons for the delay?

A.—(*a*) to (*c*) The Government have passed orders and communicated them to the officers concerned.

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—"May I ask whether the Government will be pleased to lay on the table of the House the orders passed on this matter?"

12-45 p.m.

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—"I regret my inability to do so."

Mr. S. SATYAMURTI :—"May I put another question to the hon. the Law Member? I am sure he appreciates what I say. The Commissioner of Police issued a circular commending the action of the police, without reference to the Government, and the Government later regretted that action. I think the hon. the Law Member standing on the floor of this House also said that it was unfortunate that it should have been done so. I am saying this because it is a matter in which the public are interested. We want to know who is the master here, whether it is the Government, or whether it is the Commissioner of Police. I want to know also the nature of the orders passed and the reasons that led the Government to pass those orders."

The hon. Mr. C. P. RAMASWAMI AYYAR :—"On that particular matter whether Government is the master or the Commissioner of Police, I have no hesitation in saying that Government is the master, and the